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**INAUGURAL ADDRESS**

**DELIVERED**

**ON THE**

**FIRST COMMENCEMENT OCCASION**

**OF**

**CENTENARY COLLEGE,**

**JULY 28, 1842,**

**BY T. C. THORNTON, D. D.**

**President of the College,**

**PROFESSOR OF MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL SCIENCE  
AND SACRED LITERATURE.**

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY  
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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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JACKSON, JULY, 29, 1842.

*Thomas C. Thornton, D. D., President of Centenary College,*

REV. SIR:—The immense concourse, in attendance at the late "COMMENCEMENT" exercises in the Centenary College, believing that the publication of your Inaugural Address would advance the cause of Education in the South, passed a Resolution, unanimously, requesting the Board of Trustees to procure a copy, and have it published. In conformity with this Resolution, the undersigned were appointed a committee to wait on you and solicit a copy for publication.

We have the honor to be, respected Sir,

Yours, most sincerely,

B. A. HOUGHTON,  
F. T. CHEVIS.

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CENTENARY COLLEGE, JULY 29, 1842.

GENTLEMEN:—Your note is before me, requesting, for publication, a copy of my Inaugural Address. I herewith transmit it to you. Should it, in the least, promote the cause of Education, I shall be truly gratified.

Yours, most respectfully,

T. C. THORNTON.

REV. B. A. HOUGHTON,  
DR. F. T. CHEVIS.



## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

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THE interesting occasion that has convened this large and respectable assembly, friends and fellow-citizens, is most strikingly illustrative of that Supreme Providence, both general and special, by which human affairs are all directed, for the accomplishment of ends superlatively good. These may be unperceived, or not comprehended by the limited understandings of mortals; and yet no truth is more indelibly stamped upon the works of nature, or more clearly set forth in the volume of inspiration, than that there is a God above, "who made all things," "by whom they consist," and who directs them as secondary causes, to the production of their own most appropriate and legitimate effects. The vast, the extensive plans of this Great Architect, are laid in wisdom. Their great efficient cause can only be found in his goodness. His omnipotence accomplishes them, to display his own glory, by engaging universal admiration, and constrains to the admission of the fact, that "our Heavenly Father," without whom, "a sparrow falls not to the ground," "careth for us." Evil itself is controlled by these attributes, and is made to subserve an end that its authors never designed.

A cruel and a vindictive grandfather sends from his presence an innocent babe, and seeks, by its slaughter, to render his throne more stable and safe. The designs of wickedness are counteracted by a hand unseen, unknown. In the lapse of revolving years, he, who had ordered that infant boy to be slain, perished, it is said, himself, of hunger and thirst, in an extensive desert; and the manly Cyrus, once the detested babe, a lion in war, a lamb in peace, enters triumphantly a vast city, under the guidance of a Supreme Providence, to free from captivity a people, in whose sacred books he had been pointed out, by name, long before his birth. God, who had touched Isaiah's



hallowed lips with holy fire, had commanded him to proclaim that it is He, who "*saith to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up rivers: that saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid.*"\*

At a moment when the splendor and glory of the reformation were ready to vanish from England, when infidelity boldly displayed its brazen front, and vital religion, according to the testimony of the ablest divines of the national church, was exchanged for one merely sentimental; without experience, wanting in power, and indeed consisting only in form; it pleased Him that exalts the lowly and abases the proud; to bring into being one, through whose instrumentality, direct and indirect, myriads have turned their feet to the paths of virtue and holiness. In the dark hours of the night, the lowly mansion of a man of God is wrapt in flames. His neighbors stand on each other's shoulders, and by the glare of those flames, are seen to rescue from death, a "lad, but six years old," at the moment in which the consumed stair-way and falling roof seemed to preclude all hope of deliverance. The family and friends fall on their knees, whilst the fond father exclaims, "LET THE HOUSE GO, I AM RICH ENOUGH." And who will deny it? Subsequent events proved that the "All-seeing Eye" rested on that household. But a few years had elapsed when two of that family, trained and disciplined for application and study, by a mother, whose equal has seldom been known, "surpassing their fellows both in the depth and variety of their learning," bore off, in triumph, the honors of Oxford University. With undiminished ardour they systematically pursued their literary course. Monday and Tuesday in each week, were devoted to the Greek and Roman Historians and Poets; Wednesday, to Logic and Ethics; Friday, to Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy; Saturday, to Oratory and Poetry, chiefly composition. The intermediate hours of close and set study, to the French and various reading: so that he who, but a little before, was almost miraculously rescued from the flames, shortly afterward became, not only remarkable for

\* Isaiah XLIV, 27, 28.



his application and learning, but so perfect as to write with purity and correctness, and speak with fluency, the Latin language. To him, the Greek Testament was as familiar as the English, and his skill in logic has been rarely equalled. Deeply impressed, as all should be, with the importance of religion, these brothers considered this the great business of human life, to which every occupation and pursuit ought to be subordinate.

Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; Mr. Charles Wesley, Student of Christ Church; Mr. Morgan, Commoner, of the same; and Mr. Kirkman, of Merton College; united to "mind the same things and walk by the same rule." The exact regularity of their lives, as well as their studies, caused a young man to say, "a new set of Methodists has sprung up." The name was novel and quaint. It took at once, and these Methodists were soon known all over that ancient University.

But in time, the halls of Oxford afforded a sphere entirely too limited for them. The Wesleys bursted forth as two great lights, to astonish by their elocution, their reasoning, their poetry, their piety, their zeal and their power, the listening thousands that waited on their ministry. They dwelt upon the glorious theme of experimental religion. They became the honored instruments of kindling a fire, by which, thousands of hearts, cold and hard, have been warmed and melted. Aye, more—they have been moulded too, after that fashion laid down in Divine Revelation. A revival of experimental religion commenced and spread all over England. The *established* ministry had the churches, but the Wesleys the people. God raised up scores to help in this great work. That holy flame which had fired their hearts, could not be restrained by the power of persecution, much less by the waters of the vast Atlantic. Some of these pioneers of the cross, called to our help, came to America. Here also the flame of vital piety blazed forth in every city, in every State. Husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, sisters, masters and servants, experienced that God is gracious. This revival extended to every part of our country. Thousands, saved by grace, have gone,



and thousands more are on their way, to mingle the voice of praise with the Wesleys, in that land where suffering and sorrow end in an eternal rest. A hundred years being told, at least one million of regular church members, with consecrated hearts, in every department and condition of human life, are found with their families and friends at the altar of Heaven, with a thank offering, for a revival that had continued a whole century.

The followers of Wesley pursued the tide of immigration to the North and South. They ascended the lofty Alleghanies, passed over them into the "far West," and along the entire course of the great Mississippi, that father of rivers. They sought out and pointed the enterprising immigrant to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of men. There are some here to-day, who, in this vicinity, first caused the sturdy oak to bend and bow, and made the wilderness to blossom as a rose. Villages and cities have risen up as by magic. Churches raise their lofty domes, and the church-going bell is sounded where lately were heard only the growlings of the panther, the howlings of wolves, the screechings of the nightbird, and the war-whoop of the savage. What a change! There—aye, here! in a populous and large assembly, we meet, fast by the track along which wandered the brave De Soto, and but a short distance from that spot on which the enterprising La Salle and his faithful nephew, ended alike their sufferings and their lives. Here assembled, according to ancient and honorable custom, to open in due and proper form a College, destined, we trust, to stand a monument of the various learning, the undissembled piety, the deep devotion, and well tempered zeal of that great man, the Rev. John Wesley, and the small band of primitive Methodists, which numbered at first but four; but which, now, including hearers, amounts to several millions. So deeply were the Methodists impressed with their obligations, to make an appropriate *thank offering* to their God, that every where among them, in Europe and America, in the Islands of the sea and even on the shores of Africa, they have testified to Heaven and Earth by their liberality, a firm belief, that God in his good



Providence designed a blessing to the world, in raising up these great men. Involuntarily the mind is carried back to the period when the Methodists in Oxford numbered but four. Then it is forced forward to contemplate their present condition. Like the cloud which at first was but as a man's hand, that afterward overcast the heavens—like a small hillock that soon became a towering mountain—like the purling stream, that, after many meanderings, merged in a river of vast extent; so the Methodists, as Benjamin, little at first, now number in America only, thousands of ministers and nearly a million of church members. The Mississippi Conference, a component part of these, by no means behind the thousands of our Israel in testifying their gratitude, have solemnly set apart their own and the contributions of their people and hearers, on this centenary occasion, for the advancement of the cause of learning in our common country. In this Conference are found those who, in other days, trod the almost trackless wilderness, braved the peltings of a prairie storm, making the earth their bed, the wild fruits their meats, being tentless and homeless, save an occasional visit to the cabin of the immigrant. Eminently, were such, "Travelling Preachers." These have followed the settlers and proclaimed to them the word of life. These taught the sons of the forests so distant from the crowded haunts of men, that path which leads to endless rest. Seen, as was said of the great Asbury, oftener on horseback than elsewhere, the clothes on their backs their limited wardrobe, a horse the companion of their toil, the Bible their only book, their only work to point the stranger, in the midst of his labors, to Jesus the Saviour and Redeemer of men.

What must be the emotions of the veterans of the cross this day? What the encouragement which this day gives to the junior members associated with them? Around these men of God are gathered thousands, whom the Almighty has raised up, a flock to be guarded and nursed by those who shall succeed them. They "labored, but we are come to enter into their labors." They have toiled to cultivate a wilderness, but we come to gather the fruits from their pleasant vines. Neither



they nor their flocks have ever been selfish. Instead of pouring their offerings into a treasury, to establish a fund for the support and comfort of themselves and families, in the decline of life, they have acted most generously—most nobly. We have heard of disinterested deeds—now we behold them. The grateful offerings of the laborious and veteran minister, and his benevolent and pious people, are laid down—freely laid down, to aid in rearing a literary structure, and endowing its departments, that from thence may issue a stream of blessedness to our beloved country. And the citizens of Mississippi, as we are informed, have nobly sustained the efforts of these, our fathers and brethren, to promote the cause of literature.

None will deny that the Methodist denomination ought to perform their part of this great and important work, and whilst we rejoice that others are actively engaged in doing their duty to the rising generation, we are also glad to know that the Methodist Episcopal Church is struggling to enlist all the influence it can in behalf of education. We are also gratified to learn that our fellow-citizens appreciate their motives, and second, by a liberality so very conspicuous, the feeble attempts to perform a duty to our common country. We humbly trust that we shall have ability, physical and mental, to carry into successful operation, the noble design of our fathers and brethren, and direct to its intended end, the disinterested liberality of our friends and fellow-citizens.

It is our duty, and it affords us infinite pleasure too, to present, according to a custom, venerable for its antiquity, an outline of that plan by which we hope to fulfil your wishes and render your benevolence effectual.

That physical, intellectual and moral training, by which we may be qualified in youth, for the active and practical duties of life, is denominated education. One of these is too often substituted for another, or all the rest. To improve our race and render man happy, have engaged the attention of the good and the wise of all ages. Their profound and philosophical researches, their patient investigations and experiments, and their learned discourses on the important subject of education, leave



us but little to say that is original. And yet as we also have our opinions, and although these have not the claims of novelty or of embellishment; yet, we deem it our province and duty to express them, although not wholly in accordance with those of others, or so similar as hardly to be distinguished from those already so often expressed.

Our predecessors have established principles which have been strengthened and increased by the lights of experience. The most powerful and exalted mind may find ample room for employment and practice in explaining and enforcing the same. There are, however, some errors which may be corrected, and some improvements which we think may, nay, ought to be made. The wants of civilized society are continually augmenting. Strange and numerous are the mutations which transpire.—The love of novelty often produces the most astonishing changes, and these too are sometimes wrought by the progress and increase of knowledge itself. Such being the case, we should signalize ourselves, by efforts the most powerful, to elevate the condition of man, and then render that elevation permanent. No evanescent excitement can, by any means, give stability and success to the glorious cause of education. It depends not on efforts short-lived like “the morning cloud and early dew,” but upon the patient, untiring, zealous and effectual labors of those engaged in the cause. The very thirst for change, which manifests itself in every department in society, is often rendered subservient to the introduction of systems, as pernicious to morals as they are to the cause of literature. But it must be confessed, that in the changes of human affairs, events have transpired, by which knowledge has been diffused abroad. By these it has often happened that civil and religious liberty, as opposed to tyranny and oppressions, have been advanced, and an augmentation and extension of the great benefits of literature and science have often ensued. Common school education has exposed the hidden geniuses of thousands, and has absolutely developed the necessity of colleges and universities; and, these again, have returned back the youths taken but a short time before from them, men, well qualified to teach and to adorn society.



They have become the honor and glory of their country, by disseminating that light which they have received from the labors and works of the men, whose toils could never have been appreciated by them, but for the opportunities of a collegiate course. Such wrest from the hands of the ignorant and the illiterate, the vile and corrupt, that mighty machine, the press. They direct the literary current into its own legitimate channels—they rule the science of the day. A demand is created for instructors—talented and qualified instructors. A zest for learning is generated in every grade of society, and those who aspire after and obtain professions, adorn the same, and in most instances, only live to bless mankind.

The Centenary College was opened under difficult circumstances, and in seasons of great and imminent danger. The spirit of enterprize and experiment was abroad. Innovation after innovation had entered, and many an inroad was made upon old and well established principles. New theories were started, those long since exploded revived, and those which have been established by the experience of ages, were presented as fallacious and unprofitable, and the lights of experience, we are sorry to say, almost wholly neglected.

Already, perhaps, we are denounced, because we proclaimed our attachment to old and well tried systems. We have never been disposed to reject a real improvement, in any department of literature; but whilst mind remains the same, the lights of experience are most certainly not to be neglected. We look for the old *land marks*, and steering our course by them, humbly, yet confidently expect to bestow a good, a solid, a thorough education. We profess to have made no new discoveries in the science of instruction. We make no pretensions to superiority of qualification, or novelty and improvement in our plans. As a small bark on the great literary ocean, we purpose to continue as we have begun, and sail with prudence and caution along the shore, trusting rather to the counsel, example and experience of others, than to our own judgment in matters of so much difficulty: being rather willing to found an auxiliary, than to appear a competitor of the more aged and well established institu-



tions of our country. We wish to be useful—permanently and extensively useful. In order to be so, we think that it behooves us to pay due deference to the opinions and experience of the more aged. We do not aspire to be the inventors of a new plan or theory of instruction. We seek to promote the great cause of sound education, chiefly by our diligence and faithfulness, in attending to and in enforcing the rules originating in the lights of experience.

The foundation of this College being laid in the grateful offerings of piety and goodness, it would be a departure too far from duty, and the true intent and purpose of the donors, not to make the learning acquired here, as far as is consistent and practicable, the handmaid of religion. Having assumed the duties of that station assigned the President of the Centenary College, we deem it a solemn duty to announce, that we never can consent to preside over any institution, that excludes from its halls, the means of becoming *theoretically* and *practically* christian men. Let others adopt a different course, and make seminaries of learning the nurseries of infidelity and impiety, and consequently the receptacles of prodigality and vice, it is due to ourselves that we inform the public, to such an end we never can be induced to prostitute our time and our efforts. We do not mean by this, that we have come hither to constrain the human mind and tie it down to sectarianism. God forbid that this should ever be the case in this College! On the contrary, we would leave the mind as free as air, but at the same time place before it the means of knowing and feeling the obligations that the creature owes to his allwise and great Creator. We have our predilections in religion, in politics, for authors, for learning; but we have long since learned that the most appropriate way to disseminate the truth, is to place before the mind the means of enlightenment and leave it wholly untrammelled. Let it be free for the proper exercise of its own volitions. We believe in parental and scholastic instructions and restraints, for the formation of good principles, genteel manners, and the habits of morality, economy, industry and care; but religion is the offspring of Heaven—it is a gift that God alone can bestow.



We use the means, only, in subservience to that power which is superhuman and transforming in its operations. When, therefore, we speak of religion as connected with collegiate instruction, we mean that our efforts shall be used, not only not to make the youth of our country infidels, (for God knows with all the religious restraints they have, they are bad enough,) but to "cast in" our "mite," to impress on the mind the great truths of revelation, and the obligation that rests on every man, to discharge with fidelity his duty to God, to his fellows and himself: and as happiness and safety are ever connected with virtue and piety, we are sure that our *quantum* of usefulness will be proportionate to our success, in leading the young to embrace them, and reject their opposites.

We cannot, therefore, consent, that the sacred volume shall be excluded from that course of study, which is adopted in this school. The Bible may be made a "text book" in any language, the acquisition of which is sought by a student. Parts of it in the Hebrew and Greek languages, are well adapted to the attainments of those who are commencing their course, and others, are a work of difficulty and labor, for those who approximate the termination of that course. It is the most ancient history. It contains the best system of ethics—the best code of laws; it is a model for beauty and comprehensiveness of style; for sublimity of thought and loftiness of sentiment, it commends itself, as a *book of books*, to be wondered at and admired, by the most learned. And ought not a book, whose author is God, to be just what it is—all that is wise, all that is grand, all that is heavenly, all that is perfect, and all that is good? And shall we exclude the youth of our beloved country, from the benefits arising from a knowledge of such a book? We hope not. The study of its principles from the original text, will prepare the student to appreciate the value of those works, which are assigned as his text books, in his course of mental and moral science. We have commenced then—Heaven grant that the effort may not fail—to inculcate, on all, the obligation to be good.

From the preceding remarks, it will be perceived, that we consider the study of the ancient languages as of some impor-



tance. There are several years between the ages of ten and sixteen, when a knowledge of them may be most easily acquired, and although we do not believe, that during this period, the mind is wholly incapable of grasping the elementary and most important principles of science; yet there is in it, at this age, a peculiar adaptation to the acquisition of languages. The advantages resulting from such an acquisition, are incalculable. If the Hebrew and Greek be viewed only with reference to the sacred writings, their value and necessity must be apparent to all. These are not to be supplied by any commentary, and if no other benefits resulted from an acquaintance with the Greek and Latin languages, but those which respect the etymology of words, and the facility and ease with which a Greek and Latin scholar can acquire a knowledge of modern languages, these alone would be sufficient, to justify the consumption of years in their study.

It cannot be denied that in every part of creation, there is manifested the unity of design, by which are proved, the wisdom and benevolence of a Great First Cause. By this Infinite Intelligence man is endowed with the means of bringing the powers bestowed on him into activity and usefulness. The powers themselves are granted for purposes only wise and good, though too often prostituted to an end the most vile and corrupt. Accuracy of thought and the extent of the human intellect generally proceed in equal steps, with the accuracy and extent of language. This is a proposition which we believe will bear a rigid examination. May we not then ask, what would have been intellect without language? True, we see in it a complicated whole, which we are accustomed to consider as it is, without attempting to ascertain what it has been. A complete history of its origin and progress, would be but a history of the human mind.—An examination of it is most interesting and entertaining. The subject is vast—it is inexhaustible. We attempt no elaborate exposition of it, though it were our province to do so: nor is it necessary. It would be all-sufficient to refer this respectful and attentive audience to the *learned* and *eloquent* address of one of my colleagues, Professor Magruder, who has examined this



subject before you this day, in a manner peculiarly calculated to enlighten and please. Our observations then are only intended to express the great gratification which we have felt, in hearing our own views on this delightful topic, substantiated by irrefragable testimony. What then, we say, we humbly trust will be construed as an effort, though a feeble one, to sanction, if it do not to confirm the same.

It has been supposed by some that the rudiments of language only, were originally given to man by his Creator. That this was the first step, and that he was left to complete the plan and enlarge upon a benefit so pre-eminent. That words were originally signs of things and individuals, and as new objects arose, so did words increase. Language, as it now is, wears so much the appearance of art, that men are too apt to suppose it their own invention; or, at least as the work of necessity, gradually perfected and brought into a systematic form, by causes, which, operating generally, have become modified by mere local circumstances. This opinion seems to us not more certain and true, than the ancient one that the first men lived in the caves and the woods, uttering, like beasts only, confused and inarticulate sounds, mutually agreed upon, for arbitrary signs or marks of ideas, which ultimately led to language and the rules for its construction. It is apparent that this theory itself supposes the pre-existence of language; and although we admit, indeed know, that many languages have been formed out of the one originally known to man; yet, respecting that one, we are forced to the conclusion, that it was among the numerous and valuable blessings, primarily granted to man, the distinguished favorite of Heaven, by his father God. And the nearer we approach to that period when he first came from the hands of his creator, there is no doubt that we shall find language less complicate, or rather more simple and perfect. To suppose that Adam came out of the hands of a perfect being, so imperfect as not to have, with the gift of speech, a knowledge of language, is preposterous,—and indeed, a charge derogatory to the character of him who is infinite in wisdom. The purity and beauty of language before the “confusion of tongues,” at the tower of Babel, must



have been very great. Of any improvement which had been made in the lapse of revolving years, we know nothing. It was, however, the language which God doubtless gave to Adam, and the language which he used when he talked with him in the lovely garden of Eden. The practice of hundreds of years, we presume, had not made it less perfect. Noah and his family had brought it out of the antediluvian world, and taught it to those who sprung up immediately after the flood. The Hebrew, perhaps the most ancient language now extant, if not the original, is at least a lasting monument of the comprehensiveness and simplicity of that original.

In every modern language, there is incontestible evidence, that it is compounded and made up of something more ancient and less complicate. In this, if in nothing else, may be found a most powerful reason why we should learn the ancient languages. Every man has his mental as well as physical infancy. There is a time when the mind is unformed, or to speak more philosophically, when its energies are but imperfectly developed. The great difficulty in forming these minds, originates in the adoption of a plan of education, which often gives undue cultivation to one faculty, and mostly or altogether neglects the rest. In most instances in our country, professional studies are commenced so soon, that no adequate remedy can possibly be provided against the injury done to the cause of mature and general education. A collegiate course ought always to be selected with reference to this point, and a plan of study be pursued which will invigorate and discipline the mind. But whilst the professional part of an education should be delayed, until there shall have been acquired that maturity of mind necessary for the undertaking, it is our opinion that a college course ought to be rendered as interesting and attractive as possible. In order to this, there should be an association of study, which, whilst it affords relaxation to the mind, will constantly increase the thirst after knowledge. We have said that there is a period in the life of a youth, peculiarly adapted to the acquisition of certain studies. By these, the mind is accustomed to protracted and difficult attention, and whilst the memory is strengthened,



the reasoning faculties are also improved. The ancient languages justly claim the larger portion of this part of a youth's life. Their pre-eminence in the circle of studies is indisputable. From that concise view which we have given of the origin of languages, and the agreement of the whole civilized world as to their utility, we must press upon this audience and the public, our decided opinion in favor of devoting to them time sufficient for their attainment. Not to the Latin and Greek only, but that still more ancient language the Hebrew.

From the days of Homer until now, the Greek has been the principal instrument in civilizing man, and in disseminating knowledge over various parts of the earth. Through the medium of this sonorous language, literature and the arts procured for the East more glory in one century, than all the efforts of Alexander, Cæsar and others could acquire in the lapse of so many revolving ages. Indeed, it is the tendency of military efforts to pull down and destroy, of literary acquirements to repair the wastes and ravages of tyrants and build up. In Rome, the eternal city itself, it was acknowledged that the Latin language was comparatively barbarous, until Grecians poured in their books, after the annexation of a portion of their country to the Roman empire. Thus an ignorant and ferocious people became illuminated, civilized and exalted. After this period, when the Roman empire had dissolved as the mountain snow before the summer's sun, and the dark ages had almost obliterated science, religion and civilization from the earth, through the Latin and Greek languages, literature was first preserved and then revived. These soon became the vehicles for spreading the truth at first all over Europe, and ultimately over America. This was a memorable era. Ancient and classical learning became the generous and noble auxiliary, if not benefactor and guide of modern literature. They, with a firm, a giant grasp, have held the imagination and thoughts fast, and have fixed them on proper and suitable subjects, so that a vitiated taste has been corrected, natural talent has been improved and cultivated, others have been acquired, and the whole have been rendered certain and stable. Eloquence, poetry, sentiment, style and



philosophy, mental and moral, and especially religion, all owe to the Hebrew, Greek and Latin, under God, their preservation and progress. The sublime poetry of Moses, David, Isaiah, Homer and Hesiod, the eloquence of Paul, Demosthenes and Cicero, the beauty and comprehensiveness of the historical writings, and the loftiness of the style of Samuel, Luke, Sallust, Livii and Tacitus, can only be *fully* seen and *well* known, by a perusal of their writings in the original. There are other studies which are well adapted to some of the purposes of education; but these and many other considerations, authorize the opinion that we should hesitate long, before we proscribe the study of the ancient languages.

But a few devote their time to the instruction of youth who are willing to forego the light of all experience, and substitute in its stead what is comparatively valueless. As the study of the ancient languages will probably occupy that portion of a youth's life in which the mind is incompetent to the task of severe and close application, that time when progress in education is dependent more upon memory than deep or profound mental effort; so the analyzing and tracing back to first principles, according to the laws of Etymology, will constantly increase and exercise the memory, and the daily use of the rules of construction, when converting one language into another, will not only invigorate, but employ it in a work specifically adapted to its improvement. Besides these advantages, there is a fund of information received, a rich repast spread out before the classical student, in philosophy, in history, in poetry, well calculated to attract and charm. The philosophy of language, as well as that which is mental or physical, has its attractions, and brings with its study infinite delight. Elegance, refinement, symmetry and harmony of sound, beauty and reason, are all interwoven with the ancient languages. The modern are virtually the reverse, because anomalous and imperfect. To all this we may suggest that the acquisition of the ancient languages, is among the most direct methods of securing a correct knowledge of our native tongue, and indeed of all modern European languages. Who that knows any thing of this matter, will deny, that there is



between our own language and those of Greece and Rome a most intimate connection. No man can have a critical knowledge of the English language, who is not well acquainted with the Greek and Latin. The richest gems which have ever been brought forth to adorn our language, have surely been collected from those more ancient. Whilst engaged in translating, the mind is most happily, easily, and effectually led into a knowledge of the English. It soon perceives how language is made the vehicle of thought. It apprehends the various import of words, ingenuity is brought into lively and daily exercise, and this being well directed, at the same time both disciplines and polishes the mind. Many object that impure and obscene portions are often found, in some of the best authors of antiquity, and that their systems of Mythology tend to irreligion. Our own observation and experience have proved to us, that with a little trouble, expurgated editions may be procured, or the instructor may expurgate them himself. An intimate acquaintance with the Mythology of Greece, Rome, and other nations not christian, is only calculated to expose the truth, and the immense superiority, of that system revealed in the Bible.—Youths engaged for any length of time in classical study, in a pre-eminent degree, secure one of the great ends of education, the discipline of the mind; and they acquire, as the reward of their toil, most valuable knowledge on almost every subject. Not a mere vocabulary of words, or an acquaintance with the various idioms of ancient languages, unprofitable for speech and reason; but the mental powers are brought into lively exercise, and they are invigorated and strengthened by constant and close application.

As one of the most useful branches of education, the Mathematics next claims our attention. On this subject also, it is unnecessary for us to say much. The scientific and comprehensive, not to say *mathematical* address of Professor Dodd, last winter, on this truly important branch of education, is before the world. You heard, you admired it, and you too have assented to the truth of all that was said, by the learned Professor on that occasion. An almost universal consent, yields to



the exact sciences, that place assigned them in all schools of any standing, as a most important part of that education which is liberal and complete. By the Mathematics, even an enervated memory is nerved up and rendered competent to long and arduous calculations, and a youth is accustomed to suspend his judgment, until there shall be evidence whereby to direct its decisions. Indeed, truth is perceived, many researches in Philosophy are made; some mechanic arts, and much of the business of life, can only be carried on with the assistance of Mathematics. When a wandering, idle mind, can be cured at all, it is done more effectually by the Mathematics, than by any other study. It is this beautiful science by which the heavens are brought nigh to earth, and by which are developed to man, their configuration, their order and motions. And if a tendency to enlarge and invigorate the mind, expand the views, augment the ideas, and pursue with general utility and personal profit the business of life, be the great objects of education, then the Mathematics, in all its various branches, ought to be learned by all.

The Natural Sciences claim from us also a passing, but a most respectful notice. It is generally believed that no part of the first years of a collegiate course ought to be devoted to the study of these. Other, and as they are deemed, more *important* studies, are pressed on the student, and these are left mostly to the hurried lectures of a few months, in the last year of a college course. Nothing is better calculated to impress the mind with the sovereignty of the Supreme God, and the dependance of his creature, man, on him, than the study of his works. The great principles of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry are more easily learned, than either the ancient languages or Mathematics; and whilst we are the friends of ancient literature, as you perceive, and would not consent to give to a student who is without a knowledge of them our name on a diploma, still we believe that if college students devoted a portion of their time during the first years of their course, to the study of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Comparative Anatomy and Physiology, there would be excluded from it *almost wholly*, that



*dulness* and *heaviness* which too often attend the same. The time for study would pass off comparatively lightly. The beautiful experiments in Natural Philosophy and Chemistry, the wonders of the human frame, the circulation of the blood, and, in fine, a knowledge, though limited, of the varied operations of nature, would bring to the mind of a student a continual feast, and cheer the darkest hours of classical and mathematical study.

Already the Natural Sciences are exerting an overwhelming influence in favor of classical and liberal education. They breathe into the soul of the student a thirst for knowledge, and he soon arrives at a period in which to learn, is his second nature. The most efficient agents of nature have already become subservient to the will and control of man, and tend to augment the facilities of ease and comfort during our continuance here, and all along the passage of human life. So deeply are we convinced of the infinite value of this branch of education, that we would have every common and primary school well supplied with all those elementary works on Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Geology, Botany and Astronomy, which would create in every youthful mind, a thirst, ardent and extreme, to know the wonderful works of our God. The *learning* as well as the *reading* of most men in youth, if not through life, is too trashy. If the mind were early turned to the study of the works of nature, a love for reading those books which treat of these interesting subjects, would be created, and the result would be an entire banishment of those on fiction, which ever vitiate the taste, and tend to the destruction of public morals.

The old system of educating for a special profession, previously to a knowledge of the disposition and talents of a youth, has long since been exploded. Most men have settled down upon the well tried plan of imparting a good education alike to all, and of then leaving the selection of a profession to providential circumstances, a conviction of duty, and a developement of peculiar talents. All agree that it is wrong to commence professional studies early, and thus exclude the opportunity of more extensive and general education. And yet when a pro-



fession is fixed on, nothing can be more apparent than that the education, in part, may—nay—ought to be conducted with reference to that profession; but not without due regard to the attainments of the student, and that maturity of mental and physical constitution which are requisite for the endurance of the arduous study and labor connected with it. We are inclined, however, to the opinion, that although this view is, in part at least, correct, science is generally deferred too long, or the languages and the mathematics are not commenced soon enough.

The claims of Mental Philosophy are immense. That man who neither knows nor seeks to know any thing of that complicated machine—self—the structure of his own body, is esteemed ignorant indeed. And yet philosophers all agree that the study of mind is much more interesting and important than that of anatomy or philosophy. We can but repeat the opinion already expressed, that science, now simplified as it is, ought to be taught in an earlier part of a college course; so that young men when they graduate shall know at least as much of Natural Science and Mental and Moral Philosophy, as they know of the ancient and now dead languages. If a youth be trained early to consider the phenomena of mind, to analyze those abstruse and hidden principles which characterize the same, there would most certainly be turned out from our colleges many more thinking and practical men. We should, in time, correct the evils of a bad theory, which now mostly exists, respecting education; and the whole face of society would soon become changed. A monopoly in knowledge would cease, an equilibrium would be restored, and in every neighborhood, in every village, as well as in every city and college, we should see associations formed for improvement in the arts and sciences, and the dissemination of a sound philosophy.

The mutations of opinion among metaphysicians have subjected them to the severest criticism, and have induced the belief, even among the better educated, that there are no distinct marks from which a correct theory may be formed. The same objections might apply to any other science. What have been the speculations in Chemistry? What the hypotheses among phi-



losophers on Physics as well as Metaphysics? What have been the numerous theories concerning the circulation of the blood? And who is there, after all, that does not adopt the theory of Haller and Harvey? Patient investigation and close observation will prove, that the attributes or faculties of mind are as distinctly marked, as are the different parts or systems which constitute the science of Anatomy; so that the philosopher may as distinctly understand the powers by which the mind perceives, apprehends, weighs, understands, judges, wills and performs, as the naturalist distinguishes between the osseous, muscular, nervous and circulating systems. He knows that they all unite to form a whole, and that this whole is but one branch of natural science. The advantages of early and close attention to mental and moral philosophy, will appear still more from the fact, that the student soon acquires the habit of thinking closely and systematically, and of acting for himself. He is accustomed to practice, from principle, all the virtues which beautify and adorn the moral and upright man. He sees the reason of things. He learns to trace out causes by a due consideration of their effects. He marks the effects which causes produce, and deduces from the consideration of premises legitimate conclusions.

This intelligent assembly must see, that as moral science is intimately connected with man's happiness, Natural Philosophy and Chemistry with his safety, comfort and health, how important it is for a student to be well instructed therein. In colleges alone, generally speaking, can there be found those instruments and apparatus necessary for the acquisition of some branches of natural and experimental philosophy; and although a man may, and ought to be considered, as educated without them, yet, as already suggested, they gather infinite importance from that benefit which a knowledge of them may impart, by subserving the great interests and ends of society.

In a country like ours, whose population is ever circulating as the fluid which courses in our veins, the modern languages are of great moment. We shall consider our course of study here incomplete without due attention to these. The French,



which has been adopted, as the channel through which we may become acquainted with the literature of the day, and the thousands of strangers who visit our shores, ought to be learned; and it is unpardonable not to make a student well acquainted with the English, his native tongue.

Geology and Mineralogy in a young, thriving, and, as yet, comparatively unknown State, are studies of immense value and the utmost importance. We are confident that there is hardly a tract of country in the southwest region, that has not concealed in its bowels some most valuable minerals. In a youthful, vigorous and growing State like ours, every youth ought not only to study these branches, but to be actively engaged in those investigations which may develop our resources at home. As far as our observations have extended, they have produced the conviction that Mississippi contains in its own bosom, not only an infinite variety of specimens, but a vast quantity of mineral substances and earths. These, added to its rich soil, its water power, and immense forests of timber, render the opinion reasonable, that it could sustain itself with five hundred times its present population, in the enjoyment of all the comforts of life, wholly independent of foreign aid. We invite the students of this Institution to spend a part of their vacation in procuring specimens for our cabinet; and we hope the friends of literature and science who are here this day, and many others, will contribute not only of their books, but natural curiosities, that we may have the means of imparting information on this subject, the importance of which must certainly be apparent to all who duly consider its connection with national prosperity. Is it not possible for some here to give that effectual aid, through the observations which they have made, by which mineral and other substances now embodied in the earth, may be brought forth and used in domestic life, or as an article of trade, and thus advance both our comfort and wealth?

Numerous and diversified are the subjects of human learning. The time usually allotted to the acquisition of an education is already too short. We seriously apprehend a regular and annual declension in the number of those, taking the



increase of population into the account, who prosecute a full collegiate course and obtain the consequent college honors. Already there are indications of this declension. Some colleges, doubtless, with a view to meet the whims and notions of the multitude, have lowered the standard, that they may the more conveniently shorten the time for obtaining an education. The customs and laws of our country are such, that estates are soon cut up among a number of heirs. Young men desire to get at some business for a livelihood as soon as possible. Their friends are often unwilling to spend the amount necessary to their continuance. They are mostly ignorant of the fact, that it is easy to pay back, in one year, all that is spent in several, whilst engaged in procuring a good education. The result is, that they are either hurried through by their parents, their teachers, perhaps both, or their college course is shortened, some of the most important branches are cut off, the ancient languages sometimes are discarded or really never learned, and in too many instances the *learned graduate* is incapable of translating his own diploma.

A radical defect is also found in the fact, that but a few are fully prepared to enter college. Some are well prepared in one branch, but know nothing of another. Elementary study is often neglected, or students are permitted to commence their course when deficient in some study. They promise to bring it up, too often neglect it, and have nothing but toil and labor all through. In all institutions of respectability, the standard of preparation is nearly the same. When well prepared, they have hard work to go through, in the usual time, with credit to themselves, but when the period does arrive in which they are to graduate, these, if diligent, come out, generally, number one; the rest are graduated whether educated or not, and, to use the language of a learned Professor, "range from number one to number seventy-five;" incompetent, wholly incompetent, for the ordinary transactions of human life. They have remained at college four years, are entitled in virtue of the full payment of all college fees, to graduate; and, educated or not, they must have a diploma. Against this course, we do most solemnly



protest, and notify our students, our hearers, our patrons and our fellow-citizens, that a standard is announced in our catalogue—to that standard all must come or lose the prize.

Again, new theories are adopted: the old and well tried paths, —paths which experience has proved to be the way that leads to a good and solid education,—have been deserted, and the tyro laughs at the foolishness of those who have devoted so much of their time to the ancient languages, the dry and unpalatable study of the mathematics, the mysteries of nature, and the abstruse and to him incomprehensible and unprofitable principles of mental and moral philosophy and political economy. It surely cannot advance the cause of education to increase the number of studies beyond what is absolutely necessary to make a scholar and entitle to a degree. There is not much danger of this. But there is imminent danger, that in this superficial age, an age in which men grasp at the shadow and let go the substance, lose the kernel and retain the shell, whilst a splendid course of study is announced; and the time allotted to go through that course is shortened, that time is divided among so many studies, that the student with that attendance which could perform wonders when devoted to a few, that are of vital interest and importance, cannot with unremitted diligence, now, when so many books are before him, accomplish any thing to purpose. Moreover the taste becomes vitiated, it seeks a constant change of study, mental habits are formed the reverse of those necessary to the attainment of a sound education, and whilst the graduate has a smattering of every branch of learning, he is actually and critically acquainted with none—a novice, a mere dwarf in literature. To remedy in some degree this evil, we mean the lack of time to study the entire course, the Scotch method of instruction, by lectures, has been to some extent adopted in this country; whilst many schools cleave to the old English mode of instruction by regular recitations. In the former, the student is supposed to be fully prepared in the ancient languages. He commences, reads over his course and attends on the lectures of his professor. In those institutions where instruction is given by recitation, the student is virtually constrained



to do what it is presumed he does under the other plan; but whilst under the one he is actually and fully prepared, according to the other, he is left to himself, and is seldom if ever prepared. We are of opinion that there ought to be in all colleges regular lectures, on the principles and philosophy of language, on the philosophy of natural history and on civil history; on the history of the various branches of mathematics, on natural philosophy and the principles of intellectual and moral science; and, notwithstanding all this, no student ought to pass one day without a recitation in his regular course. However the mode of instruction by lectures may be adapted to the acquisition of a profession, there is no doubt that students, both in law and medicine, would progress faster and be far more critical, if they were constrained to attend upon regular recitations in their studies. This double method of instruction is adopted by us. Our students are required to recite regularly, and the professors will deliver such lectures as may be necessary to illustrate and explain. Whilst lectures may be adapted to the condition of those who, with matured minds, are acquiring a profession, they are not certainly suited to the condition of most students in the American colleges. These are generally young. By frequent recitations a professor is made acquainted with the mental capacity and application of his scholars, abstruse portions of his text books are explained, and he sees that these are studied and well digested by his class; proper encouragement is given to those who are discouraged, and numberless opportunities are afforded to excite the dull and indolent to action. Besides, an instructor is constantly improving himself, and by daily practice, is keeping pace with the improvements of the age. When a proper selection of text books is made, of the latest and most approved editions, and a class is kept at regular recitations, there is no telling how much quicker it will progress, than when it has no other access to a professor than what is granted during a lecture, the benefit of which, may be wholly prevented by dullness, inattention, the absence of proper preparation on the part of a student, or any physical or other defect on the part of the professor. Lectures increase the fame and glory of the professor;



recitations make good scholars, and in the recitation rooms the defects of text books are often supplied by the expositions and illustrations of the professor.

Great evils have doubtless resulted from the fact, that many students who have finished, at a college, their literary education, have had to leave it to procure elsewhere a professional one. By the connection of a law and medical school with some of the colleges of our country, this evil is in part remedied. And this is the plan proposed in the Centenary College—a plan which is already, in part, carried out. Here, a profession, as well as a literary and scientific education, may be procured. It is obvious that where one or two professors devote their whole time to the service of a class, they can easily impart in more extended time, what is generally imparted by several professors in a few weeks or months. Such is the plan of the Centenary College. The whole time of the professors is devoted to instruction—most of the branches taught are remotely, some of them intimately and directly connected with the professions for which, as we have understood, some of the students are intended—and this is done by daily recitations and expositions, and occasional lectures, as yet, mostly private.

For many years it has been a custom in most of the States, to place the appropriations for the advancement of education, in the hands of the most popular sect, to the *utter exclusion*, in most instances, of all others from a participation thereof. The excuse for this act has generally been, that christian ministers and christian men of different creeds, cannot discharge together the duties of teachers in harmony and peace. We confess we do not believe this. However diversified their sentiments and interests in other departments of business, we find that christian men agree, and we present it for the consideration of our fellow-citizens, and their decision too, whether or no if the course were pursued of putting seminaries of learning whose funds are derived immediately from the people, by legislative enactment, under the care of an equal number of persons from the different denominations of christians, it might not unite them the more tenderly to one another. Be this as it may, there ought not to



be a course of legislation appropriating public funds for education, and placing the same wholly in the hands of one sect to the utter exclusion of the other.

It is, however, by no means intended that these remarks apply where funds for the advancement of education are raised by individual or denominational liberality. This is essentially different, and it must be apparent to all, that it ought ever to be the true policy of legislators to encourage, by acts of incorporation, the devotion of such funds to educational purposes alone. This custom and policy has heretofore been pursued by all the States, not excepting Mississippi. Any other power granted to a board of trustees would be unconstitutional—any thing short of this, a denial of rights guarantied to citizens by the constitution, simply on the ground of their being attached to some one branch of the christian church. And why, permit me to ask, is there *here* this hostility to schools under the special patronage of religious denominations? We might press, if so disposed, this question, and ask has any school ever prospered and become permanent in this State, or in the South-Western States, that has not been under the special patronage of some religious denomination? Must a school be professedly infidel in a christian community to entitle it to State patronage and prosperity? Does not the cause of education flourish more in those States that, without regard to sect or denomination, charter colleges granting specific, *not exclusive privileges*, to those who are the patrons of the same, as to the selection of their trustees, and the management of funds collected or given by themselves, not for individual, but for general benefit, in the dissemination of light and learning throughout every grade of society? Some do not seem able to distinguish between a school in which English, classical and scientific literature is taught, and a school intended for instruction in the dogmas of a sect. The Centenary College is not now, and, I trust in God, it never will be, a theological school. It has no professorship of divinity, and whilst divine worship is regularly and respectfully attended by its faculty and students, it is perfectly free from the charge of sectarianism. It affords no instruction in the peculiar tenets of Methodism.



nor are these to be found in any part of our course of study. Here are the sons of gentlemen of different religious creeds—all are taught here alike, that literary and scientific course which we have adopted. All are required to regulate their conduct according to the principles of morality and order—the profligate, the vile, the immoral and indolent youth, whether the son of a Methodist or of another, has no place here. Here the children of Methodists have no peculiar or exclusive privileges. They pay the same as others—they have, like others, to yield implicit obedience, and are only permitted as others, to rise to honor here, on their own attainments and merits. May we not ask, can there then be a contest about denominational ascendancy in the management of an interest which, from its origin, is one with the efforts and noble charity of an individual sect? Is not the same door open to others? May they not exercise the same liberality and identify themselves with the glorious cause of education? Have not our sister churches done it? Have they not done so in Mississippi, and does not this State owe to individual and denominational effort its all of education? Where are the graduates to college honors from Mississippi State institutions? Because a religious denomination contributes of its means to the advancement of education, must it therefore be charged with seeking a monopoly therein? And because, abandoning all selfishness, it has devoted its means an offering, a centenary offering, to the great and interesting cause of learning, must it therefore be esteemed as essaying to do that which endangers the liberty of our country? We make no lofty claims, we seek not to excite either jealousy or resistance. We have, as citizens, our rights—we desire to exercise them. We ask no exclusive privileges—we give our labor, our means, to our country for our country's good—resolved that, however others may esteem us, we will do our duty, and leave the consequences with God and our country. It will, we know, be borne in mind by our fellow-citizens, that schools and colleges wholly dependant on public liberality and public patronage and confidence, for the means of subsistence, will not enter the lists as aspirants for exclusive privileges. The fact is, an aristocracy



of learning,—a monopoly—is encouraged and sought to be exercised, chiefly by those who know that, by legal enactments and a *public tax alone*, can their situations become *stable* and their *support be secured*.

College discipline is another important subject which demands our attention. Before our effort here, it was considered problematical whether or no scholastic discipline could be maintained in any institution in the South. Indeed, another question arose, and we were asked whether or no southern parents would submit their sons to that strict government necessary to the continued existence and prosperity of a school. We are happy to know that we have fully tested this question, and are ourselves competent to testify favorably for both southern parents and southern students. We are not sure that any antidote has ever been provided against the great evil which often results from the transfer of a youth from the domicil of his parents, where he is governed not so much by positive rules, as by an absolute power enforced by parental authority, to the halls of a college, where he must become the subject of a government of laws. Most youths look upon the regulations which propriety and morality require, as arbitrary and tyrannical. They cannot see their use; they are unaccustomed to weigh the motives and reasons for such regulations. Heretofore ruled by the authority and influence of a parent, they now often artfully seek to evade punishment, although they infringe established regulations; or becoming wholly reckless, they regard not the results of their own transgressions. We believe that there are two modes of doing every thing—the wrong and the right. We are of opinion that the laws of colleges are generally too numerous, and that many of the difficulties which occur, originate in the dispositions and habits of teachers. A morose, fault-finding, censorious disposition, will always produce its own effects, in a family, in society, and in a school. Condescension and kindness in professors of acknowledged talents, will do much to remedy the evils just alluded to. Students look on such professors as their friends—as next to their fathers in authority and influence. If, then, there be but a few plain and positive rules, enforced with



an unflinching firmness, with decision and uniformity, there will be comparatively but a few occasions for inflicting the severer punishments of suspension, dismissal, or expulsion. In the exercise of discipline in the Preparatory School, where there are small boys, we are both in principle and practice, averse to corporal punishments, even among those engaged in elementary study, except for conduct grossly immoral, and that in a manner as nearly as possible parental, and under parental instruction. Reproof and confinement often supply most appropriately, the necessity of such a punishment, and we certainly believe it should never be resorted to in order to secure a good recitation. We think it is best when boys are incurably idle, to send them at once to their parents, who may shape that course which they in their wisdom, under a conviction of their responsibility and duty, may deem best. A few such examples will always produce a happy effect upon others. We are now engaged in what may be considered an experiment. We are ready to cast in our mite to effect some radical improvement in the college discipline of the South. We view ourselves as substituted for parents, and whilst we intend to be decided in the exercise of discipline, and enforce strictly the few prudential regulations adopted, which chiefly respect the course of study and those open and flagrant offences which prove the offender unfit for college associations, we intend that our government shall be as nearly as possible parental. To do this it is evident there must be in the faculty, both in regard to students and all others connected with the college, a discretionary power. A government in itself as nearly as possible parental, must take into consideration, and as often as may be proper, be exercised, in reference to the dispositions of youths, and the circumstances of the case. This must necessarily require the most perfect and uniform walk on the part of teachers. Precept is feeble and unprofitable without example, and therefore the walk of professors acting on these principles, must be such as to enforce and carry home to the hearts and the affections of students, the conviction of that interest which is taken in their welfare and happiness.



A plan of this kind is calculated to exalt a student to the condition of a fit companion for his professor, and whilst that professor becomes his guardian, his Mentor, or adviser, his confidence is secured, his feelings and affections are enlisted, occasions for needless severity are cut off, the honorable feelings of the student are preserved, and there is no danger of that complete overthrow of self-dignity and respect, which often results from the exercise of discipline in such a way as to *dismiss* or *expel*, simply because rule is violated, when there is no decided indication of incurable depravity, and where all hope of reformation is not utterly cut off. When it may become absolutely necessary to separate one from college associations, a private request for parents to withdraw such, will often effect all the ends of discipline. But when such dismiss themselves, or are dismissed, if parents would exercise their authority in inflicting that punishment which is merited, and return the individual to his work, many a wayward youth would doubtlessly be recovered from the error of his way. By lessons on economy, by withholding the means of extravagance and pleasure, parents should forestall their sons and prevent evil. They should require a strict account of every cent that is expended. They should not let their sons have any money but through the hands of their patrons, and then only in small sums. Were this done, we should soon behold a different state of things. We do not intend to read this assembly a lecture on domestic and parental government and economy, but only to show the vast amount of assistance which parents and guardians may afford in governing our colleges according to the principles of order and morality, industry and economy. With a view to economy, the trustees of the Centenary College have directed the adoption of a uniform, of neat and substantial material. This has been fixed on, at a cost comparatively small, and will, we hope, cut off from us that thirst for fashion, and an ostentatious display on the part of those whose parents are wealthy, and who thus seek to distinguish themselves, instead of being distinguished by their application, their success in study, and the faithful performance of every duty that devolves on a student.



Out of the many who enter college, we are sorry that we are constrained to say, few, comparatively, remain until they graduate. This may be traced to various causes, mostly, however, we believe, to the want of union between parents and professors in the exercise of discipline. When a student finds his professors prompt in the exercise of disciplinary regulations, he appeals to his parents to provide for him a better home. "For once" they indulge him; at last he cannot be kept at college at all. This is a subject of vast importance and of thrilling interest. The cause of education—the destiny of thousands depend on it. In the discharge of this day's work, a solemn duty—to which with honesty and integrity of heart and purpose, we bring our feeble and humble efforts—we solemnly appeal to parents and guardians to sustain us, in that prompt action which we believe it our duty to take, that all those evils to which we have alluded, may, if within the compass of human possibility, be either cut off or effectually remedied.

There is another great and crying evil. We are so much afraid of sectarianism, that we often exclude christianity wholly from our colleges, and leave our sons to be trained to infidelity and Atheism, by those who glory in making science subservient to the cause of impiety and unbelief. May not the dilapidated condition of many of our colleges be attributed to this fact? In some institutions of learning, as already suggested, the Bible, as a text book, is wholly excluded, and the practical duties of christianity are construed into sectarianism. Young men are never taught, either by precept or example, the evidences, obligations, and moral duties of christianity. Grecian, Roman, and Scandinavian Mithology, are made the subjects of daily study and recitations, but revealed religion, in all its parts, whether doctrinal, preceptive, or devotional, must be excluded, as partaking too much of *sectarianism*. Aye, more! the bible—that book of books—whose author is the Allwise God—whose doctrines are pure like himself—whose laws are the sure foundation of all order—and whose object and end are eternal life, is likewise cast out. This must be kept from the view of the student, and he must be withheld from all the instruction that it



affords. The results are disastrous indeed. Morality and religion, which are far more valuable than any earthly attainments, however great, are not only banished from such a school, but generally from the practice and lives of both its professors and students. Cut off from parental authority and every restraint, youths are left to the bare influence of previous parental instruction, or the cold and heartless counsels of those "who say and do not." The consequence is too obvious not to be seen and known.

In vain may we watch over and throw restraints around our sons under such circumstances. We may enclose them with a wall and deny them egress. The whole inclination of man is depraved, and when left without an abiding conviction of the obligations of piety, he will, he must go back. Civilized society is built up and subsists through the medium of revelation and religion. Banish these, and you dissolve the tie by which it is held together, and it is quickly reduced to its former chaotic state. What, therefore, must be the inevitable condition of those youths who are separated from the instructions and pious precepts of godly parents, thrown in the midst of those whose presence too often contaminates, at a period in life when they are incapable of governing their own passions and restraining their own appetites? Then, too, infidelity has its votaries in those who instruct. According to their theory, religion and morality are sectarianism; and in a little time the youth that was trained at the altar, laughs at the piety of his father—perhaps the minister of God—and the deep, heartfelt devotion of his mother, as excusable weaknesses. Often before the danger is seen by those parents, the son, we admit, is a scholar, but what else? A free-thinker—profane—the companion of the debauchee, the vile and the corrupt—a drunkard—a gambler—ruined—wrecked—undone. Infidels may talk of virtue: they may display its beauty and set forth its claims to superior excellence, but when the motives of revelation are lost on a man, his morality is but a gauze covering, that can never conceal the deformity of his actions, or the depravity of his heart. It is a shell—a mere outside—"a vain philosophy"—a specious



show—"a cloud without water"—"a wandering star for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness." It is our deliberate opinion that there is a deception, a fraud practised on public morals—an hypocrisy in all this which hardly finds an apology in the kind and generous feelings of the most charitable. What! exclude religion, religious services and the bible, from seminaries of learning? What! in a christian country, whose every institution, whether of civilization or of religion, is traced to some principle, custom, or law of the bible? What! teach heathen mythology, but drive out of doors christianity, the only anchor of man's hope? We cannot—away with such demoralizing theory.

Without the fear of contradiction we aver, that this is a christian country. Its citizens are professedly and generally christian. The President of the United States, and all the officers, legislators and judges of the general government, in whose hands are placed the destinies of this great nation, must pledge themselves on the word of God to be true and faithful, however faithful before, or they never can enter on the duties of their office. Our State—the State of Mississippi—will not allow its Governor, however exalted in its estimation, nor any legislator, nor any judge, nor any juror, however honest, upright and faithful, to exercise the functions of his office, until, on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, he shall swear to be true and faithful. Thus have the christian people of this christian State, proclaimed their superior confidence in the claims and obligations of christianity. We cannot go any where—we cannot consider any of the relations and duties of life, as designated by law among us, that do not acknowledge the divinity of the christian religion. There is no office so high and worthy, no relation so sacred, so important or binding, that it must not be enforced by the sanctions of an oath on that bible, which the religious and good people of this christian State, have proclaimed to the world that they receive, as of divine authenticity and paramount obligation. Other States may say that a constitution, laws and customs which make such acknowledgments respecting the christian religion, are "a sacred legacy left them by



their fathers." Orators, in strains of unparalleled eloquence, may set forth their virtues, and exalt on high the fame of the noble band, that piously interwove in the constitution and laws of their country, christianity, the best boon of Heaven to earth; but we, my friends, are differently situated. As late as the year 1832, Mississippians adopted their constitution. There are those here to-day who were present at the making and adoption of the same. The fathers of those who inhabit other States, formed constitutions having the christian principles and faith as their basis; but you have voluntarily adopted a constitution, which proclaims yourselves christians, and which is rendered more stable and permanent by the sanctions of a christian oath. And shall we who are called on to instruct and those instructed be alone excepted from the light and obligations of christianity? Shall these sons of a christian people be raised christians or infidels? This is the question. We must meet it. We dare not go around it. The people—the people will not permit it.

Gentlemen is it not too late in the day to ask such a question? Some answer, no! Let youths be raised neither infidels nor christians. Leave them to themselves. We hope not, sirs! This is what infidelity wants. It knows that the depraved tendency of our nature is retrograde. This is not sufficient for us; we want our children not only *not infidels* but to be *christians*. We want them, and we do not hesitate one moment to proclaim it, to live and die the meek and humble disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we here solemnly pledge ourselves to this christian State and the christian church, a branch of which has become the patrons of this infant institution, we will never forget that christianity has had an important part in yielding the noble charity, by which this centenary monument has been reared. We will never forget that it is raised to the memory of that illustrious divine, the Rev. John Wesley, and that it is destined in time to come, to commemorate the organization and union of the first Methodist society that ever was formed. Understand us, friends.—We hope never to witness a *proselyting* spirit—a spirit of *bigotry* and *sectarianism* here. No! Here, we trust, will be educated the sons of other christian denomina-



tions, as well as those of Methodists, who shall together, share in all the immunities and privileges of education, without even a reference to peculiar creeds. And from these halls we trust will go forth young men, who shall adorn the christian name, in the various departments of usefulness, in our common country. We are not concerned about their becoming Methodists. We are now engaged in a great and arduous work, and we confess, we are deeply concerned that they become christians. We are perfectly willing to leave the selection of a home with them, satisfied, as far as we are personally interested, that they shall enter this or that branch of the christian church, after that they shall have experienced its divine consolations.

Some years since, a distinguished citizen of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, bequeathed an immense amount, the earnings of his personal labors, for the establishment of a college, from whose walls christian instruction should ever be excluded. We did not then believe that the blessing of God would rest on and follow such an act. Already the withering curse of Heaven has fallen on the gift. The offering is rejected, and even before its halls are open, the fund thus liberally devised, is consumed chiefly in rearing a splendid monument of mortal vanity. We do not remember an act of such distinguished liberality; and yet we believe it has presented an occasion for this nation to decide for itself and posterity, that it is and will be christian. Infidelity is not the soil in which the tree of liberty, civil or religious, can ever flourish. Its natural tendency is to licentiousness and anarchy. Some viewed the plan proposed, in its incipient state, as a complete triumph of the principles and opinions of *Free thinkers*. The God of Heaven laughed at the attempt,—he marked the indignity offered to himself, under the show of a charity so noble, and Monsieur Girard is hardly cold in his grave, before his vast fortune is exhausted by bank speculations, and the cost of an edifice not yet half finished. Thus has been thwarted a plan, which, being originally intended to sap the foundations of christianity, could only naturally lead to the murder of immortal souls.



In a large and flourishing institution, two questions of great importance arise, which ought always to be coolly and calmly considered. What *may* be done to induce habits of economy and promote the physical health and vigor of youth, and what *can* be done to aid the indigent but meritorious young man?—Long has the great and interesting subject of manual labor schools been a matter of discussion and experiment. To create a habit of industry, to induce economy, to provide the means of education for the worthy, but needy young man, and thus enable and enlist him to educate others, until all are educated, are objects of vital interest and importance. We do not here intend to discuss the value of the manual labor system. We were long a votary of that plan; but after the strictest inquiry into the success and present condition of the few in operation, we have deliberately made up our mind, that the plan of a manual labor school is practicable where only it is connected with an academic course; but that it never can be connected with a regularly established college, without the greatest inconvenience. As it regards the physical health of students, all who understand the construction of mind know, that relaxation from study and a turn in the tide of thought, are imperiously demanded and are requisite to bodily health. Among all students, some manly exercise, which will aid in forming a good constitution, ought to be daily taken; but if it be in the shape of labor, a question will arise, which is most certainly founded in philosophy: will it relax the mind and relieve it wholly, from that almost incessant application, which is required for a student who is prosecuting a collegiate course? But where students are only seeking an academical education, it is easy to arrange the labor so that they may, with some degree of success, attend to both. One thing is certain, as far as I have been able to learn, the manual labor system has not been successful in a solitary college; but in two or three academies it has succeeded admirably, and what is still more surprising, it has not succeeded at the North and East, in either academies or colleges, and that partial success which it has obtained, is, I believe, chiefly, if not wholly, at the South.



We have admitted that students must have exercise, and it is now we think the settled policy of the most stable and experienced friends of education, to exclude from seminaries of learning, all those exercises and plays, calculated to engender strifes among students, and allow them some manly and violent exercise, such as walking, running, jumping, at stated periods, to invigorate the body, relax, and consequently nerve up and strengthen the mind; and then push the student on to the completion of his course, as fast as is compatible with the acquisition of a liberal and solid education. In a short time he is prepared to act as a public instructor, through the medium of which, he may repay the kindness of those who have aided him, and use the means procured by this education, for the attainment of a profession, if desired, unless they can be commanded from his own immediate relatives, or private resources.

The mode for assisting indigent young men, which has been adopted in this college, was recommended some years since, when we were on a committee to whom was referred this important subject. The indigent young man may enter our school with the understanding that he shall pay for his tuition two years after obtaining an education, without interest, and never to be put in suit. Thus are preserved the feelings and independence of a student. The debt is one of "honor," and by the education received, he is enabled to pay it off, sometimes with the utmost convenience in one year. The great difficulty, however, with such is, the amount necessary for board. The same committee just named, recommended the organization of an education society, for lending aid to indigent young men, without regard to sect or denomination, in a sum of money sufficient to pay one third, one half, three fourths, or all their board for one, two or more years, with the understanding that the same be returned without interest in a specified time, and never to be put in suit. This would place the indigent young man on a ground as nearly independent as possible. It would be subserving the interests of education, not that all could thus be educated, but these would aid to educate others. It would bring into the ranks of fame and usefulness some of the finest talents in our



country, talents which are now completely buried. In this way too, a vast number of well qualified school masters would be sent forth on the bosom of society, to enlarge annually, to an immense extent, the circle of the *educated*. None can deny that colleges are necessary to the existence and support of primary or common schools and academies, and these again are subservient to the great interests of colleges, and aid in sustaining them. We believe there is a system in which all the parts are mutually dependent on one another. Our academies or preparatory schools draw their scholars from the primary and elementary schools. Colleges receive those preparatory students and qualify them, by a more extensive course of languages and science, for enlarged operations and usefulness. These again are returned back as teachers and trustees in subordinate schools, or thrown out on the bosom of society as professional men, to adorn the same, by discharging their varied duties with integrity and usefulness. Thus primary and collegiate education become auxiliary to one another. At a period in our history, when the increasing means of this and the adjoining States justify the opinion, that at no very distant day, the demand for teachers will be immense in our elementary schools and academies, it is both prudent and right to enquire from whence are they to come? Must they be always imported? This is a question big with importance. Is that policy good and proper, which goes to make ourselves tributary to others, not only for clothing, but the education of our children? The rich will never be school-masters. The poor young man alone will endure the toil and hardships of instructing youth. The office of an instructor is one of the most honorable and useful, and a little aid, according to some general plan, which the friends of this and other literary institutions may adopt, will multiply the number of teachers at home to such an extent, as to cut off the demand for those from abroad. In the present aspect too of affairs, it does seem to us, that the continuance of the existing system is most certainly impolitic, if not fraught with the greatest danger.

Questions of serious moment, indeed of vital interest, with which are connected the peace, independence and safety of the



South, are now agitated and discussed both in Europe and America, by those who know nothing of us, nothing of our condition, nothing of our institutions. The tyranny by which a foreign race was translated to our shores, entailed upon our fathers and their children, to educate and train them for civilized life, is so manifest, that "he who runs may read." Under such circumstances, we are not safe, when we invite and press into our service and families, those who have been accustomed to hear us represented as the most vile and corrupt. We cannot believe, that whilst this contest is carried on, with so much acrimony, the men who are bound to us by no tie of consanguinity or property, ought to be received, identified with us, and made the instructors of our youth. It may happen, that in the person of a teacher, we may find a disciple of Tappan, Garrettson, or the learned Doctor Channing. We are not disposed to stir this question here. It is one of thrilling interest to us. On it, long since, we have taken our stand, and have consequently been denounced in almost every abolition paper north of the Potomac. Born, raised and educated south of that river, we are identified with the south in all those feelings which characterize them.—We are happy in being personally acquainted with hundreds at the North and East, whose influence and piety point them out as the proper persons to stand in the breach, and prevent the harm that must necessarily ensue to this nation, if the fanaticism just alluded to shall continue and prevail. We trust that the oil which such shall pour out on the disturbed waters, will calm the same, and produce that tranquility and peace on this delicate question, which are so desirable to all the lovers of our common country.

The confidence which we repose in the ability, the patience, forbearance, the prudence and diligence of those gentlemen associated with us in the government of this institution, is such, that we have no fear as to our success. One collegiate year has now expired. Our association has doubtless been strengthened by all our intercourse. We know them to be working men—men who delight in scientific and literary research—men who delight to teach—men of long tried experience in teaching



—men whose lives will be devoted to it, and of whom it may emphatically be said they are *Southern* men. The course of instruction adopted by the faculty is extensive, and such as will, when well studied, make a scholar. The practicability of carrying on a school, upon an extensive scale, in the South, is no longer problematical. We have fully tested this point, during the past year, and it affords us a pleasure indescribable, to declare before this large and respected assembly, that the students of the Centenary College, in our humble opinion, can compare with any in the United States, for order, application and progress in study.

The public mind, not having been sufficiently excited on the subject of preparatory instruction, appalling difficulties, in the commencement, presented themselves, and prevented that advancement which otherwise might have been made. These are surmounted, and we now behold, with infinite pleasure, the plain and open pathway to science, to honor, and to usefulness.

The gentlemen, trustees of the Centenary College, will, we trust, excuse the liberty we take to address them. If, gentlemen, we had been so prosperous and successful on our journey, as to have arrived here last November, in time to deliver our inaugural, as the President of this institution, whatever might have been, then, our confidence and hopes, we could not have spoken as we now do. A personal acquaintance, has united with experience and time, to make that confidence strong and unwavering. We are confirmed and strengthened in our hopes. We feel assured that your policy is both liberal and enlightened. We have marked, with pleasure, your determination to sustain the Faculty, in the exercise of a wholesome discipline. The schools are now carried on upon an enlarged scale. Your own liberality, exalted views and personal influence, have contributed much to this great end. We know how to appreciate the value of such help. The deep and the abiding interest which you take in the prosperity of the College, must daily add new vigor and energy to our exertions, and augment and establish our confidence in you. We tender to you our thanks for that polite and respectful attention, which has been extended by



you to us. May we often meet and enjoy here, together, as officers of the same institution, the rich literary repasts which we confidently expect will be annually presented in this beautiful hall. We trust you will accept for yourselves, and present to our patrons, scattered over a vast extent of country, our thanks for the numerous evidences which you and they have granted, of your confidence in us. We assure you, gentlemen, that it is most sincerely reciprocated.

The Faculty of this institution will accept the assurance of confidence in their qualifications for that work in which we are engaged. We have lived and labored together long enough to know that we are *one in purpose, one in effort, and one in affection*. Our task, gentlemen, is one of much toil and immense responsibility. The great motives by which we are actuated, are the same. We seek our country's good, in training her youth for virtue, integrity and usefulness. We are not exactly at the threshold of our labors. We have been engaged in them long enough to know that track, over which, in daily toil, we must tread. Already we have much encouragement. In your zeal, your industry, your application to study, your faithfulness and integrity as public instructors, in your love of order, and your attention to discipline, we have the pledge, not only of extensive usefulness, but increasing reputation. These are the sure and undoubted tokens that you "shall have your reward." We devoutly pray that we may live long together in harmony and happiness; being blessed ourselves in blessing others with the light and benefits of literature and science.

Young gentlemen of the Centenary College:—the few months that we have spent together, occupied in those literary researches, which tend to enlarge the views and expand the mind, have only tended to unite and endear you, one and all, to us. At first you were discouraged, and ready to yield all hope of succeeding. I need not repeat here your numerous complaints, that you were never taught elementary principle, with that faithfulness, which would ensure a speedy and successful advancement in your course. At times almost disheartened, you were ready to give up all effort. At last you found that what



could be done by others, could also be done by you. The effort was made and you have succeeded, we know, beyond your most sanguine expectations. Some of your companions were well prepared in all primary studies. These have generously aided us in aiding others. They are now near the termination of their course. Like the traveller, long immured in an extensive wilderness, who approaches with delight the open land, the cultivated fields and the habitations of men, so you not only see, but feel, that you can accomplish that which at first appeared wholly impracticable. What was dark and mysterious, is now plain and easy to be understood. The more intimate my acquaintance with you, the stronger my attachment and respect have become.

It has sometimes happened, that in the discharge of our official duties, we have had to encounter your wishes, and insist on a course against which were all your predilections and habits. We have had to enforce the principle of unreserved submission to rule and to order. We have had to claim from you an application and attention to study, to which most of you were unaccustomed. And yet, young gentlemen, your obedience has been generally both willing and constant. You have progressed in your studies to our astonishment. A gracious Providence has preserved your lives and your health. None of us have been more than indisposed. We trust He will protect you on your journey, bring you in safety to your homes and the enjoyment of their tender associations. Your parents and friends anxiously desire to see you; the recreations incident to a visit among them, will doubtless afford you great pleasure. Be careful of your health. We hope you will return after the vacation, to renew on the 1st of October, your efforts with fresh zeal and ardor. It is but a short time, my young friends, before you will seize the prize, and possess, as the reward of your toil, the proffered honors of our institution. You have lived in the utmost harmony with each other and your professors.—You have lived together as brothers. The friendships formed here are destined to last and be affectionately remembered through life.



Fellow-citizens, we cannot close without addressing you. We have resided at this lovely spot more than three fourths of a year. Our constant and pressing engagements have prevented those opportunities of intercourse and association, which would have been pleasing and acceptable to us. Although deprived of the pleasure of an extensive acquaintance, yet it gives us infinite delight to express that gratification which we have felt at our reception, and the prospect of usefulness that lies before us. We have parted with the friends of our youth. We have left in a distant land the graves of our fathers. We are now identified with Mississippi and all its interests. We are not here because we could not have a home elsewhere. We are here of choice. We rejoice that we are here. We feel that we are among our brethren and friends. We trust by our course to merit that confidence which you have reposed in us. Our highest aspirations are, that this institution may succeed, even beyond the most sanguine expectations of its most sanguine friends. Rest assured, gentlemen and ladies, every exertion shall be made to carry into full and successful operation, the great and truly philanthropic plan of those who have founded the Centenary College. The Mississippi Conference has been long enlisted in the cause of education. Three female schools, now, as heretofore, in successful operation, have been long patronized by it. The Centenary College, although it be not exactly the first of their efforts to advance this cause, is destined to tell to future years, the piety, the zeal, the liberality, the generous and noble deeds of these our fathers and brethren. They might have devoted the centenary offerings of a willing people to sustain themselves and families; to the support of their superannuated and afflicted brethren; the widows and orphan children of those who fell under the fatigues and sufferings incident to a missionary's work, in a new and sickly country. They have nobly and generously yielded their own private claims and interests, to advance the cause of literature, and fix the hearts of their flocks on the performance of a common duty to our common country. This beautiful situation has been selected.—One so well adapted to all the purposes of a college.



A situation not only remarkable for health, but one wholly cut off from all the haunts of intemperance and vice. Along those romantic and lovely walks, and under those beautiful bowers, formed by nature's own hand, shall the student converse with those of former times, and fit and prepare himself for all the active and relative duties of human life. The aid of able and experienced professors, such as we now have, granted to faithful and diligent students, like the hundred now assembled from every part of our country in this spacious hall, will most certainly have a powerful effect in reviving and strengthening the cause of education. Already vigorous and strong, although in its minority, sustained by our patrons and friends, and their number, we are happy to know, is daily increasing, we shall be able to prove to you, fellow-citizens, and to the world, that the Centenary College is not unworthy of that patronage which you have condescended to grant. Perhaps no college ever had such ardent, zealous and talented agents. Their untiring exertions demand our acknowledgments. In the past, we have the sure pledge of future exertions and success, and upon these and the kindness and liberality of our friends, we must for a while mainly depend, until the means so generously and nobly proffered by our numerous subscribers, can be made available, and supply any deficiency which may occur, in pecuniary matters. We want a large and an extensive library. We want philosophical, chemical and astronomical apparatus and instruments. We want a museum of natural curiosities, and a collection of mineral and other substances. We want a gallery of paintings and works of art. We want the halls of our societies finished, and a musical saloon. We confide in you and our distant friends, to aid, by their liberality, in a work of so much interest to us all.

But, fellow-citizens, whilst we confide in the integrity and sincere friendship of the founders of this college, and whilst we repose also the utmost confidence in the zeal and the efforts of our talented and efficient agents, and the support and friendship of yourselves and our numerous distant friends, we cannot forego the pleasure which we feel in announcing that our main reliance



is in the humble, the heart-felt and fervent prayers, that are offered in our behalf. How often have we been enlivened and stimulated to renewed exertion, by the thought, that thousands of the pious are praying for us. Their ministers—holy men of God—are presenting us, in their faithful supplications, at a throne of grace. The father—the mother—shed their tears and pour out their souls, in all the fervency of fervent prayer for us. And will not their God hear in Heaven, and command that his blessing descend? Does he not witness the secret aspirations of that heart—a father's, a mother's heart—who, having a son here, prays, Father, let thy blessing rest on the Centenary College? Is not the angel of the covenant near to answer their prayers? We trust he is, and that when the voice of your speaker shall be hushed in the silence of the grave, and be no longer heard in these halls—when this vast assembly shall be gathered to their fathers, the Centenary College shall, we trust, rear its head in grandeur—a monument of the philanthropy, liberality and piety of its original founders and friends. And may God grant it for Christ's sake. Amen.



ERRATA:

✍ In several impressions of this address, a few errors escaped the notice of the proof reader, which the reader will please correct, viz:

4th page, 5th line from bottom, for detested, read deserted.

10th page, 2d line from bottom for found, read be found.

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